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At length the cardinal, a great patron of the arts, began to be exceedingly anxious relative to the lad. He caused inquiries to be made, and found that the monks of an isolated convent had sheltered the young artist of fourteen, who had humbly asked permission of them to copy a picture by Raphael which was in the chapel of the cloister. He had been freely allowed to carry out his wish. He was then brought back to the cardinal, who received him with kindness, and placed him at school with one of the best painters of Rome.

Fifty years later, there were two old men who lived like brethren in one of the most beautiful villas of Florence. People said of the one, "He is one of the greatest painters of the day," and of the other, "He is a model of friendship." It was Pietro de Cortona and his friend, the scullion—the one a great painter, the other a rich and honoured citizen.

#### THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE.

THERE is a tradition current in Spain, which is not one of the least singular of the tales which float about in connexion with painters. One day Rubens was in the neighbourhood of Madrid, and went into a convent of very severe rules, and remarked, not without some surprise, in an humble and poor choir of the monastery, a picture of the most sublime and admirable talent. This picture represented the death of a monk. Rubens summoned his scholars, showed them the picture, and asked their opinion. All replied, that it was of exceeding genius.

"Who can be the author of this work?" asked Vandyk, the cherished pupil of Rubens.

"There is a name at the bottom of the picture, but it has been carefully rubbed out," replied Van Thulden.

Rubens begged the favour of an interview with the prior, and asked of the old monk the name of the artist, whose production he admired so much.

"The painter is no longer of this world," replied the abbot.

"Dead!" cried Rubens, "dead! And no one knows his name, no one ever hinted to me, no one told me, of his name, which should be immortal,—a name before which my own would have faded. And yet, my father," said the artist with a flush of pride, "I am Paul Rubens."

At the sound of this name, the pale face of the prior was animated by singular warmth. His eyes flashed and he looked at Rubens with a strange and wild look—a faint glimmer of pride flashed across his face—but it lasted only a moment. The monk then looked down, crossed his arms, which for a moment he had raised to the heavens in an instant of enthusiasm.

"The artist is not of this world," he repeated.

"His name, my father—his name, that I may let the whole world know it, that I may render unto him the glory which is due unto him."

The monk shook in every limb; a cold sweat burst out upon his body and tinged his wan cheeks; his lips were compressed convulsively, like priests ready to reveal a mystery of which you know the secret.

"His name, his name," cried Rubens.

The monk shook his head.

"Listen to me, my brother; you have not understood my meaning. I said to you that the artist was not of this world: I did not say he was dead."

"You say he lives," cried the artists in chorus. "Give forth his name."

"He has renounced the world—he is in a cloister, he is a monk."

"A monk, my father, a monk? Oh, tell me in what convent. He must come out of it. When God stamps a man with the seal of genius, this man should not be buried in obscurity. God gives such a man a sublime mission, and he must accomplish his destiny. Tell me in what cloister he is concealed, and I will tear him from it, telling him of the glory that awaits him. If he refuses, I will have him commanded

by the Pope to return to the world and resume his brushes. The Pope loves me, my father, and the Pope will hearken to my words."

"I will give up neither his name nor the cloister which has opened its shelter to him," replied the monk in a firm tone.

"The Pope will command you," said Rubens, exasperated.

"Listen to me," replied the monk, "listen to me, in the name of God. Do you think that this man, before leaving the world, before renouncing fortune and glory, did not first struggle firmly against such a resolution? Think you, brother, that he must not have felt bitter deceptions, bitter sorrow, before he became convinced that all was deception and vanity? Let him then die in peace in that shelter he has found against the world and its sorrow. Your efforts, moreover, will be in vain—he will triumphantly reject your advances," he added, making the sign of the cross, "for God will continue to be his friend, God, who in his mercy has deigned to appear to him, and will not drive him from his presence."

"But, father, he renounces immortality."

"Immortality is nothing in presence of eternity."

And the monk refused to carry on the conversation.

Rubens went away with his pupils, silent and sad, and returned to Madrid.

The prior went back to his cell, and kneeling down on the straw mat which served him as a bed, prayed fervently to God.

Then he collected together his pencils, his colours, and his easel, which were scattered about his cell, and cast them through the window into the river which flowed beneath. He gazed then a little while sadly at these objects as they floated away.

When they had entirely disappeared, he kneeled down again, and prayed with excessive fervour.

The author of the masterpiece was never known.

#### GERARD DOUW.

GERARD Douw, the most feeling and expressive of Dutch *genre* painters, Durer excepted, was born at Leyden on the 7th of April, 1613. His father, Janszoon Douw, was a glazier. Gerard, however, showed no inclination to follow that trade, but early manifested a taste for the fine arts. The father did not oppose his son's inclinations, but, on the contrary, did all in his power to encourage and strengthen them. When a mere child, Gerard Douw was placed with Bartholomew Dolendo, an engraver, with whom he remained for some few months, acquiring considerable skill in the art. He was then placed with Peter Rouwhorn, painter on glass, with whom he remained about two years more. At the expiration of that period, such was the progress the young artist had made, that his master had little else to teach him, and accordingly, at fifteen years of age, Gerard Douw became the pupil of the celebrated Rembrandt. After three years of unremitting study under that master, Douw felt that he might release himself from the trammels of an instructor, and dispense with all lessons, except those taught by nature herself. Accordingly, he left the studio of Rembrandt, and prepared to take his own independent position in the world of art.

Portrait painting was the first style which engaged his attention; but of this he soon tired. He found that it exacted too much of his versatile powers. Not only did it necessitate the trouble of taking accurate likenesses, but also of painting good pictures. He required more time, too, to perfect his works than many people who wished to engage his talents were disposed to give. Their patience was fairly exhausted before he had completed more than a mere sketch of their features. Such was the elaborate patience which he bestowed upon the effort to render every detail of his picture in the most perfect manner, that Descamps assures us, on one occasion, when Douw was engaged in painting the por-